

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EPA-01 CEQ-01 DLOS-09 ABF-01 FEA-01

ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15

STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /112 W

-----020336Z 129285 /22

R 312246Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3484

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USOECN PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1552

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, NO

SUBJECT: GAO REVIEW OF POTENTIAL FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT  
OF NORWEGIAN OIL

REFS: (A) OSLO 1526 (B) 76 OSLO 5577

1. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT GAO IS CONTEMPLATING REVIEW OF  
POTENTIAL FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH SEA ENERGY  
RESOURCES WHICH WOULD INCLUDE VISIT BY GAO PERSONNEL TO NORWAY  
IN APRIL. EMBASSY IS SYMPATHETIC WITH DESIREABILITY OF EN-  
COURAGING NORWAY TO INCREASE ITS OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT AND HAS MADE THIS ONE OF PRINCIPAL U.S. OBJECTIVES  
IN NORWAY IN ITS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT.

2. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, ABOUT A U.S. TEAM VISITING  
NORWAY TO DISCUSS INCREASED NORWEGIAN OIL DEVELOPMENT. THE  
SUBJECT OF PACE OF DEVELOPMENT OF OIL AND GAS RESOURCES IS  
EXTRAORDINARILY SENSITIVE IN NORWAY AND IS LIKELY TO BE A KEY  
ISSUE IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS THIS SUMMER (SEE REF A).  
NORWAY IS DETERMINED TO PURSUE ITS OWN OIL POLICY AND TO SET  
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ITS OWN RATE OF DEVELOPMENT, AND NORWEGIANS ARE SENSITIVE  
TO AND RESENTFUL OF OUTSIDE PRESSURE TO INFLUENCE OIL PRODUCTION.  
NORWAY JOINED IEA AS A ASSOCIATE RATHER THAN A FULL MEMBER IN  
ORDER TO PROTECT ITS AUTONOMY IN ENERGY MATTERS, AND FOREIGN  
MINISTER FRYDENLUND HAS SAID NORWAY WOULD RESIST ANY EXTERNAL  
PRESSURE TO CHANGE OIL POLICY AND INCREASE PRODUCTION. THE  
QUESTION OF IEA MEMBERSHIP WILL BE REVIEWED AGAIN IN PARLIAMENT

THIS SPRING. EVEN A RECENT IEA STUDY WHICH INDICATED THAT NORWAY COULD INCREASE PRODUCTION WAS WIDELY DISCUSSED AND RESENTED IN NORWAY (OSLO 5577).

3. EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT ANY AWARENESS HERE OF AN OUTSIDE STUDY OF RATE OF NORWEGIAN OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY PRIOR TO NORWAY'S ELECTIONS, MIGHT WELL BE MISCONTRUED AS U.S. INTERFERENCE IN NORWEGIAN DOMESTIC POLICY AND COULD BECOME AN ELECTION ISSUE. A VISIT BY GAO OFFICIALS OR OTHERS CONDUCTING STUDY WOULD ATTRACT CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION, WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME PUBLIC, LEAVING THE U.S. OPEN TO THE CHARGE OF INSERTING ITSELF INTO NORWEGIAN ELECTION. THE RESULT WOULD BE AWKWARD FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, CAUSE RENEWED CRITICISM OF THE IEA, AND POSSIBLY RESULT IN LESS WILLINGNESS BY NORWAY TO ACCELERATE OFFSHORE DEVELOPMENT.

4. FOR THESE REASONS, EMBASSY URGES THAT GAO STUDY AND VISIT INSOFAR AS IT RELATES TO NORWAY, BE POSTPONED AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. EVEN THEN IF THERE WERE LESS OBVIOUS WAYS TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION WE THINK A VISIT SHOULD NOT BE HELD. MEANWHILE, IF GAO HAS ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING NORWEGIAN PRODUCTION, RESERVES, DEVELOPMENT PLANS, ETC., THE EMBASSY WOULD BE PLEASED TO TRY TO PROVIDE ANSWERS.

ANDERS

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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